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Kwe Kwe

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## Come to My Kwe-Kwe

**Friday September 2, 2016**

8:00pm – 1:00am

**St. Stephen's Church Auditorium**

2806 Newkirk Avenue & E 28th St, Brooklyn NY 11226





## Kwe-Kwe!

a uniquely Guyanese pre-wedding ceremony from the African-Guyanese tradition, providing Guyanese or wanna-be Guyanese the opportunity to have a celebration before the wedding.

...it's an evening of singing, dancing, eating and drinking.

...an opportunity for the two families to get to know each other.

...and, traditionally to provide instructional and psychological preparation to the bride and groom for married life.





*Show Meh Yuh Science, Science Ay!*

Oh, de Drums, de Drums, de drums





Kwe Kwe takes place on the night before the marriage of an African-Guyanese couple. It is an evening of singing, dance, eating and drinking. The purpose of the Kwe Kwe is jollification, emphasizing new relationships created by the union and, traditionally, to provide instructional and psychological preparation to the bride and groom for married life.



Kwe Kwe Bride

At the start of Kwe Kwe, participants arrange themselves in the house or outside on a specially made wooden floor and the Leader sings the solo parts of the songs which are sung in a call-and-response pattern. A song continues until someone shouts “bato-bato”. This is a signal to stop and change a song. A new song can be introduced by any member of the group but it is the Leader who raises the tune.

The main purposes of marriage in the society were and continue to be the continuation of the lineage and the granting of legitimacy to sexual relations.

In the communities from which African Guyanese claim their ancestry and traditions, the ability by the mothers or grooms, variously, was much prized and admired. But virginity on the part of the brides was even more prized giving rise to such songs on the tradition of the Guyanese Kwe Kwe as:

*Woman lie down and the man can't function  
Wu kinda man laika da, laika da  
Take yuh calabash, wash yuh bembe  
Na me shame a yuh Muma shame.*

Although the Kwe Kwe dance is no longer as socially significant as it used to be, the songs provide an important insight into the customs, beliefs, practices and the highly creative ability of older generations of people of African descent for adapting to their new environment, releasing their tensions, and dealing with the problems of everyday life.

Kwe Kwe is still a celebration not only in the secular sense of village unity but in the larger “Guyanese” sense by the incorporation and binding of elements that are African, East Indian and European.

## Stages of the Kwe Kwe Celebration



A **GANDA** is opened by sprinkling rum on the floor and around the doors and windows, inviting the spirits of the dead to join in the celebration.

- The **GREETING SONG** “Good Night Ay” is raised by the Tutor or Caller.
- That is followed by the **GENERAL INVITATION** “Come to My Kwe Kwe”
- The **BUYING OF THE BRIDEGROOM**, the advice on matrimonial matters, the demand for a demonstration of the couple’s sexual skill “Show Me Yuh Science”
- Ends with the **DEPARTURE SONG** “Las Wan, Las Wan”



## ABOUT US

The Guyana Cultural Association NY Inc, sponsors of the Guyana Folk Festival and GuyFolkFest.org is a Not-For-Profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to promoting our culture through the annual Guyana Folk Festival ...Read More

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